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**FRONTIERS OF ROMAN EMPIRE WORLD HERITAGE SITE  
– POTENTIAL NOMINATION OF THE DANUBE RIVER FRONTIER  
OF MOESIA SUPERIOR**

**Resources of Danubian Region:  
the Possibility of Cooperation and Utilization**

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**Abstract.** The Moesian limes – a fortified northern border along the Danube of the Roman province Moesia Superior – is part of more than 5000 km long frontier of the Roman Empire, accepted now as unique monument on the World Heritage list. It is the first complex, transnational world heritage site. Different from region to region, under the modular Frontiers of Roman Empire, on the list already are Hadrian's Wall, Antonine Wall, and Upper German–Raetian frontier. Sections of Roman limes are by now on the Tentative list of Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia, while Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia stated their intention to nominate their remains.

Paper presents developed models of cooperation and best practices that could be used to smooth the progress of Serbia in the nomination process, as well as steps necessary to achieve appropriate balance between scientific research, conservation, interpretation and access.

Special attention is on museums' role in the process of the FRE Serbian nomination and huge cooperation potential for scientists and heritage professionals.

**Key words:** Moesian limes, Roman frontiers, world heritage, Danube, Serbia, museums

## Introduction

Дунав

History, social and economic development of the Roman province Moesia Superior, character and type of archaeological sites and finds, were largely determined in the first place by Moesia being frontier province. Its main feature from Roman times is certainly *limes* – a fortified northern border along the Danube that was part of imperial defensive system, with legionary camps in Singidunum, Viminacium and Margum (?) and more than 30 auxiliary forts and fortresses along the river line (**Fig. 1**).

These archaeological sites, known already from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Marsigli 1726; Kanitz 1904), and in the focus of scientist ever since, were the subject of field prospection, excavations, and two immensely important archaeological projects conducted during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (**Fig. 2**), and as a result 39 military sites were discovered and most of them partially excavated (*Starinar* 1984; *Cahiers des Portes de Fer* 1980–1987; Petrović, Vasić 1996: 15–26). Potentials – scientific as well as cultural – are not fully explored or exercised, and this huge body of information and great number of archaeological features with scientific relevance and importance, is not completely available to scientific community, and acknowledged or visible to general public.

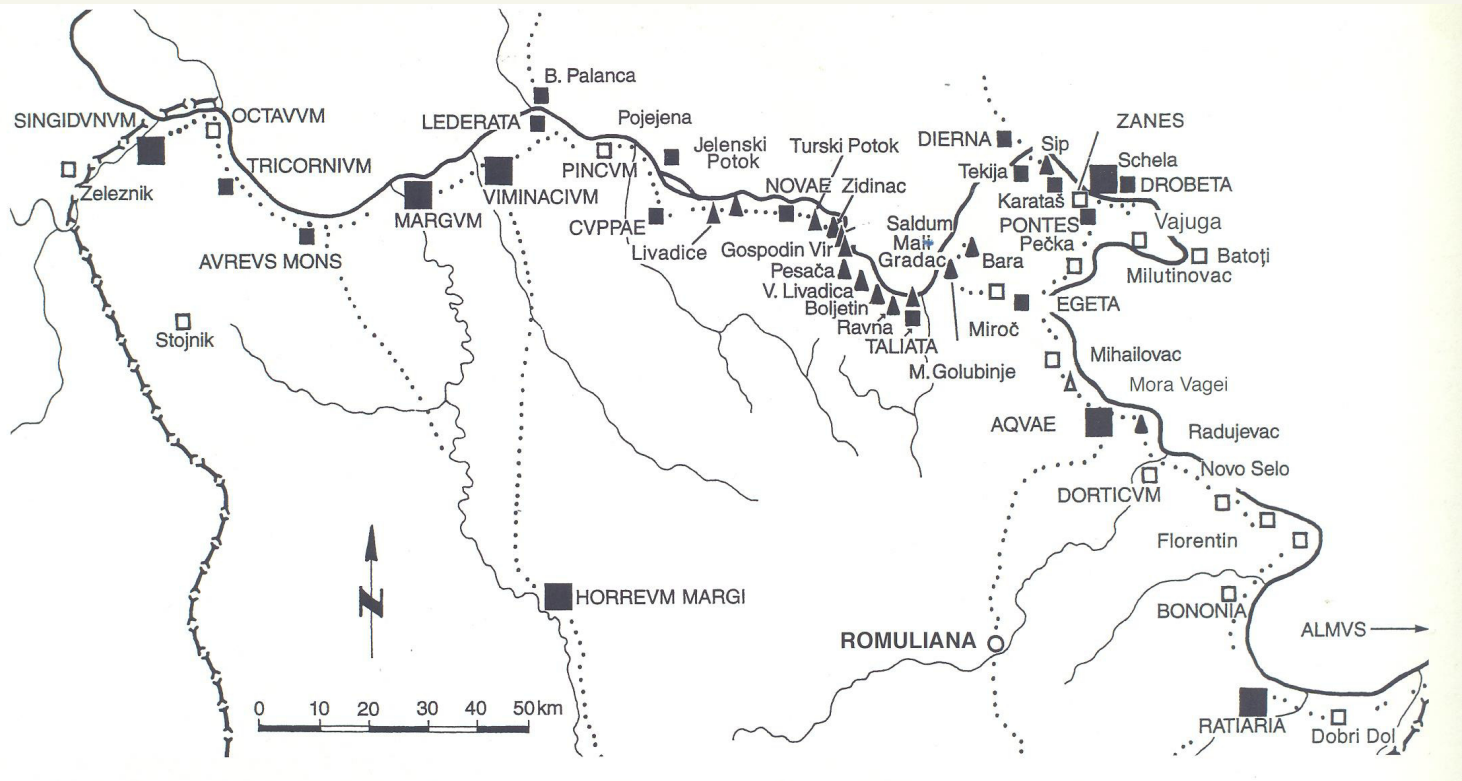


Fig. 1 – Map of the Moesian limes (after Mirković 2007)

This stretch of the fortified border, from the times of the Roman Empire, with structures from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, commonly known as Moesian limes, is not unique feature of this province, but the part of immense structure known as the frontiers of the Roman Empire. They extended from the Atlantic coast of Scotland, along the Rhine and Danube rivers, with a protrusion into Romania along the Carpathian Mountains, to the Black Sea; from the southern shore of the Black Sea through the Middle East to the Red Sea and from there across North Africa, along the northern edge of the Sahara Desert, to the Atlantic coast of Morocco. These frontiers, over 5,000 km long, dating generally from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, defined the Roman Empire (Breeze, Jilek 2008a: 25).

### History of the *Frontiers of Roman Empire* as the World Heritage Site

The significance of the frontiers of the Roman Empire is not just pure scientific and its research and conservation valuable for archaeology, history, or other disciplines in the process of interpreting past. It is the legacy from the Roman times recognized as unique and irreplaceable cultural heritage,

Fig. 2 – Smorna, fort at the mouth of the river Boljetin

Donau

and as such, archaeological sites, monuments and landscapes of the Roman frontier were acknowledged from all countries on the national level. On the international level, Hadrian's Wall, United Kingdom, was inscribed in 1987 to the World heritage list,<sup>1</sup> forming part of the cultural and natural heritage considered to have outstanding universal value.<sup>2</sup>

Last two decades changed completely attitude and method of state parties for submission of limes remains on the World Heritage list.<sup>3</sup> The Upper German-Raetian Limes, Germany (Czysz et al 2008), coupled in 2005 Hadrian's Wall (Breeze 2011), and new World Heritage Site (WHS) was made, the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (FRE). This is a truly unusual WHS – it encompasses archaeological remains in many countries rather than just one or two countries as is the present situation with WHS; it is, in short, a multi-national WHS.

It is the first complex, transnational world heritage site, acknowledged as artificial frontiers from the height of the Empire, from Trajan to Septimius Severus. Under the modular FRE – a phased, serial World Heritage Site, possibility was created to encompass all the frontiers of the Roman Empire, different from region to region, but with one important common attribute – they exhibit important interchanges of human and cultural values at the zenith of the Roman Empire. The aspiration to bring within FRE all appropriately preserved elements of the frontiers of the Roman Empire in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, was starting to fulfil in 2008: the Antonine Wall in Scotland was included on the World Heritage List as the extension of the FRE (Breeze 2009). Sections of Roman limes<sup>4</sup> are already on the Tentative list of Austria (since 2011), Croatia (2005; Vukmanić 2009: 31-32), Hungary (2009; Visy 2008), and Slovakia (2002; Harmadyová et al. 2008),<sup>5</sup> while Bulgaria (Dyczek 2008), Romania and Serbia stated their intention to nominate their remains of the limes as part of the WHS. Roman forts in Syria and Jordan are on in the process of nomination in these countries as well (Breeze, Jilek 2008a: 25).

Dunărea



## The Moesian limes

The Moesian limes belongs to the one of the river frontiers of Roman Empire, to the Danube limes – the approximate 2850 km long section of the fortified Roman border following the natural river course, running from Brigobannis (Hüfingen in Germany) to Ad Stoma in the river delta in Romania (Sommer 2009: 103), through eight modern countries (Jilek 2008a: 67).<sup>6</sup> It was the northern borderline of the Roman Empire from the time of the Emperor Augustus in some countries, to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was one of the most important frontier sections of the Roman Empire, with the strong military power concentrated along the line. Among numerous Roman military installations along the Danube, in various states of survival (Jilek 2009: 67–99) is the Moesian one, in-between the ending points of Upper Moesian northern border, Singidunum (Belgrade) and Ratiaria (Archar).<sup>7</sup>

The defensive system along the Danube was created and built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Earthen camps at Novae, Boljetin and Diana were confirmed in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century (**Fig. 3**); the beginning of the building of the road through the Iron Gate gorge belongs certainly to this first phase as well (Vasić, Kondić 1986: 524-544; Petrović, Vasić 1996: 20; Mirković 1996: 31–35; Kondić 1996: 81–86), and on the other end of the frontier, Singidunum has preserved structures probably from this early stage (Popović 1997: **Fig. 3**).



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Fig. 3.  
Remains of earthen  
Flavian phase at Diana  
(after Kondić 1991)

Significant changes in a Roman frontier policy denote the Flavian phase of the Moesian, and from 86 AD Upper Moesian limes (Mirković 1996: 31-37). It was in those times (AD 69–96), and especially during the reign of Domitian, that the Danube frontier became the focal point of Roman military activities, determining further military history of the Empire generally (Strobel 1989: 113) and in particular, the military and economic history of Moesia Superior. New earthen permanent camps were built and previous temporary bases were strengthened, and some had been replaced by newly built stone *castra* and *castellum*, like Viminacium, Cuppae, Novae, Smyrna, Taliata, Transdierna, Diana, Pontes, Drobeta, Egeta (Vasić, Kondić 1986: 543; Petrović, Vasić 1996: 20–21; Mirković 2007: 35–40). Along the river line between Singidunum and Ratiaria a linear chain of fortifications was created (Petrović, Vasić 1996: 20-21) implementing the first objective of Roman middle and lower Danube border policy, the one that would be completely fulfilled in Trajanic times: full connection of the Danube fortresses, i.e. continuous fortified frontier from Carnuntum till the Black Sea. Permanent army was made of legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia (Mirković 1968: 23–27; Mirković 2003: 8-26; Mirković 2007: 30-42).

Trajan's (AD 98-117) large building activities and transformation of the limes, included also building and reparation of a road through the Iron Gates gorge, construction of a channel near Sip and Diana to avoid dangerous cataracts, and raising up a bridge between Pontes (Transdrobeta) and Drobeta (Mirković 2003: 26-31), by architect Apolodorus (**Fig. 4**), and a new port at Kusjak (Petrović 1991a: 295-298; Petrović 1995: 129-139). Those activities were also the important part of



Fig. 4.  
Trajan's bridge  
at Pontes

Trajan's large preparations for peacekeeping along the Danube and for further expansion, on the left side of the river. The main threat for the areas immediately south of the Danube, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and particularly in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD represented Dacians, new force in Danube zone, powerful political union spreading also to the Voivodina and south of the Danube. The conquest of the left riverbank and establishment of the new province of Dacia happened after Trajan's Dacian wars, in AD 101-106. The section of the limes between Viminacium and Novae lost its military purpose as a border defence. This was the only change in the flow of river frontiers, usually very static, which happened in the course of several centuries.

After withdrawal of the Roman army and an abandonment of Dacian provinces 270/275, the Moesian frontier was again the first line of defence.<sup>8</sup> Fortifications on the right bank of the river Danube were reorganized: beside reinforcing frontier forts and fortresses, new fortifications were built, and inner defensive systems were strengthened or created; guarding of communications was reinforced. The great building activities at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and again in the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century are visible along the Moesian limes (Petrović, Vasić 1996: 21–22; Kondić 2013: 36-59).

Special quality of the limes in Serbia is remains of the 6<sup>th</sup> century building activities and renovation in the reign of Justinian, until the Slavs invasion in the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (**Fig. 5**). The frontier regain its strength and importance lost in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and for the short period of time, with newly constructed forts, reconstruction of auxiliary castra and renovation of smaller forts, the early Byzantine Moesian limes was again significant borderline (Petrović, Vasić 1996: 22–23).



Fig. 5  
Renewal in the 6<sup>th</sup>  
century: Justinian's  
phase at Diana



## State of research, preservation and presentation of the Moesian limes

Unfortunately, huge body of military installations is nowadays under water due to the construction of a big power plant in the Iron Gate area. When the power stations were built in Serbia during the 1980ies, many elements of the Roman frontier, e.g. forts, fortlets, watchtowers and the road through the Iron Gate were flooded and are not visible any longer. Additionally, some of the Roman military sites on the Moesian Limes lay in intensively used areas.

Singidunum is one that has been destroyed or built over. Significant economic centre, Singidunum became a municipium in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, during Hadrian reign, while the status of colony was given in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Singidunum was the permanent camp of the legion IV *Flaviae*, since AD 89 or from the beginning of the 2nd century to mid-5<sup>th</sup> century (Mirković 1968: 37-49; Popović 1982: 27-36; Bojović 1996: 53-68, Mirković 2007: 50-52). Excavations in urban centre or at Belgrade Fortress revealed Roman features and artefacts thereby demonstrating the archaeological potential of such area (Bojović 1996: 53-68; Popović 1997: 1-20).

Downstream from Belgrade the Limes monuments are more often set in the surrounding landscape. Sites like Viminacium, Diana and Pontes lay in the open countryside and are still striking landscape elements, even now visible. Viminacium (**Fig. 6**) was the biggest urban settlement, the capital and an important military centre (permanent camp of VII Claudia legion) of the Moesia Superior. A municipal status was given to the community of Roman citizens in times of Hadrian, while Viminacium became a colony under Gordian III, most probably in 239. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, it became an episcopal seat. A military camp, on the right bank of the river Mlava, existed till mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, while a smaller fortification was built on the left bank in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Popović V. 1967: 29-53; Mirković 1968: 58-73; Mirković 1986: 21-203; Spasić-Đurić 2002). Extensive excavations revealed different structures

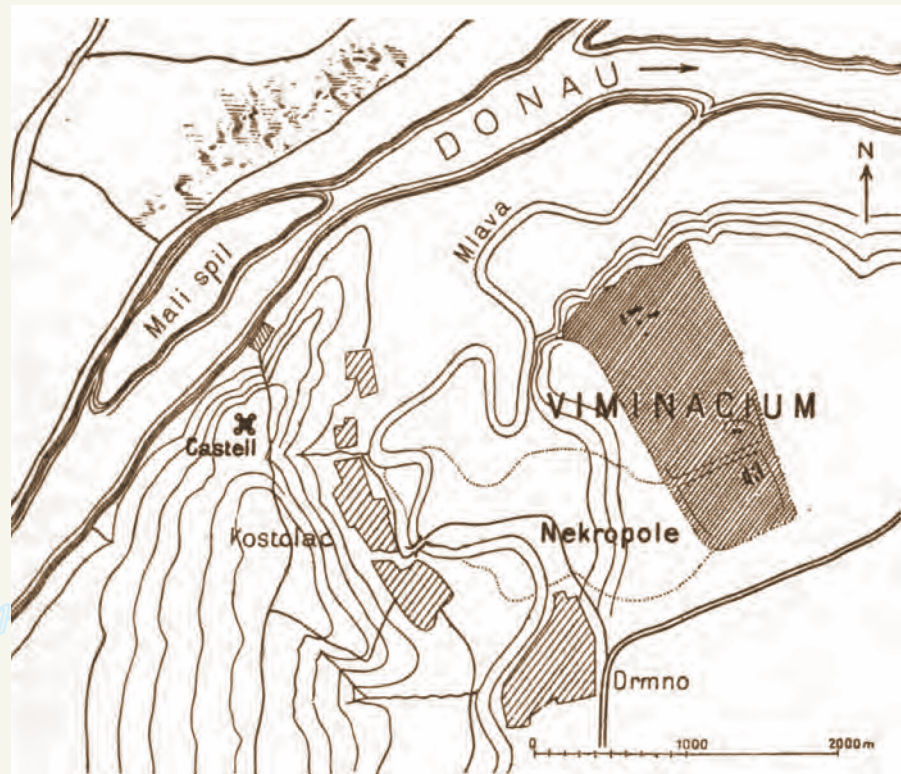


Fig. 6  
Viminacium, drawing of Felix Kanitz

of the town and its necropolises. Recent transformation of Viminacium from the archaeological site to the archaeological park, with preserved structures (the north gate of the camp, basilica, thermae, mausoleum, necropolises with numerous tombs and funerary memorial) presented in new way, secured the future of the Viminacium as important cultural heritage and certain touristic destination (Korać et al. 2009).

Another feature of the Moesian limes moderately preserved in the countryside is the site of Margum–Orašje, Roman town on the right bank of the river Morava, at its mouth into the Danube. It was strategically important site where, as it is assumed, legion IV Flaviae was stationed until reign of Trajan. So far, the finds from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> till the 5<sup>th</sup> century (**Fig. 7**) have been discovered on a limited area of excavations (Marić 1951: 113-132; Mirković 1968: 50-55; Spasić-Đurić 2003: 11-24; Ivanišević, Bugarski 2012: 239-255).

One of the rare still preserved smaller fortlets of the *burgus* type of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is Mora Vagei (Mihajlovac), maybe the most representative one of that type. It was destroyed twice during the Late Roman period and renewed again in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Cermanović-Kuzmanović, Stanković 1986: 453-466).



Fig. 7  
Antefix, Margum area (National Museum in Belgrade)

The fortification - *castrum* – within the Moesian Limes, identified as “the station at the cataract” Diana (**Fig. 8**) is one of the best preserved. During the systematic explorations, done continuously since 1978 and nowadays, a large number of edifices within the fortress have been found, as well as all basic elements of the fortification, including perimeter walls stretched to the Danube, protecting the harbour, and also a part of the south-western necropolis. It had, with various reconstructions, adaptations and building of new structures in five main building phases, existed till the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. An Early Byzantine fortification is identified as Zanes (Rankov 1982: 51-60 (with previous literature); Kondić 1991: 261-272; Kondić 1996: 81-86; Rankov-Kondić 2009: 367-402).



Danube was important shipping route, mostly for the supply of the troops; smaller and bigger harbours and piers existed along the river line, some part of a supply centre (Ilić et al. 2011: 65–72). Besides Diana and the remains of huge harbour at Kusjak, known are a fortified complex with the strong economic features, probably supply centre at the Mouth of the Porečka River (Petrović 1981: 53–63; Petrović 1984: 285–291), or a pier at the Late Roman fort at Hajdučka Vodenica (Jovanović 1984: 319–331). The hypothesis were made about the existence of harbours, based on presence of fleet or historical resources, at Singidunum (fortified port) and Viminacium (Ilić et al. 2011: 65), and there is an assumption about each fortification along the Danube having at least a pier, regarding the importance of Danube as the transport route (Petrović 1991:207–216).

Another significant feature of the Danube limes is the only stone bridge at this stretch, Trajan's bridge, which spanned the Danube between the forts of Pontes and Drobeta, built as the part of Trajan's preparation for the war with Dacians and immediately after the territory north of the Danube became the Roman province of Dacia (**Fig. 9**). During excavations undertaken from 1979, besides four columns of the bridge, the main elements of the fortification as well as the structures inside it, dated to several phases in the time span from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century were discovered (Garašanin, Vasić 1987: 71–116 (with previous literature); Petrović, Vasić 1996: 15–26).

Remains of developed infrastructure, the limes roads, are still preserved in the Iron Gate's gorge and there are inscriptions explaining their importance (Mirković 1996: 30, 36, 38, Mirković 2003: 12–21). Roads linked the individual military installations and auxiliary features. The supra-regional Limes road was connected to inner military structures, and fortifications in the hinterland, such as in the river Timok valley.

The Roman frontier in Moesia Superior was in the focus of research especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though there is a dynamic history of investigation of the Danube limes in Serbia, there are still sites on this borderline where details are not known or adequately recorded. Limes features – Singidunum, Viminacium, Diana, Pontes with the Trajan's bridge, remains that survived well to the present day – are still visible testimonies of the Danube river frontier. They all represent complex urban settlements and military sites, not just in archaeological respect, but from the point of conservation, interpretation and presentation as well. Unfortunately, presentation of the archaeological sites did not have that much attention previously, with the attitude that



Fig. 9.

Roman bronze portrait of Trajan's father, Kostol (National Museum in Belgrade)

'remains speak for themselves', and that interpretation were not necessary. The Archaeological Museum of Iron Gates in Kladovo continues to be the only specialized museum, with a distinctive place in the presentation of the Limes remains (**Fig. 10**). New holistic approach, where conservation, presentation and interpretation are all to be an equal part of management of sites, thankfully is slowly introduced in our praxis. The nomination for the FRE WHS will certainly promote those efforts.



Fig. 10.  
The Archaeological Museum  
of Iron Gates

Дунай

### Nomination of the Moesian limes for the FRE WHS

The Frontiers of Roman Empire is the unique trans-national site created and accepted as multi-national, serial phased WHS. That implies that individual countries sharing a section of the Roman Limes can join. Within the efforts to preserve the archaeological elements of the Roman heritage, Serbia has indicated the intention to nominate its section of fortified Roman border, and in the future we expect for the Moesian limes to be placed on the national Tentative Lists for the UNESCO inscription.<sup>9</sup>

Joining the existing the Frontiers of the Roman Empire WHS mean as well that developed models of cooperation, experience of professional involved up to day in the process and best practices could be used to smooth the progress of Serbia in rather complicated nomination process.

Know-how of countries and experts involved probably are embodied the best in the project *Frontiers of the Roman Empire – the European dimension of a world heritage site* realized within the *Culture 2000 programme* (Fig. 11).<sup>10</sup> The project was structured to raise awareness of general public but as well to improve scientific knowledge and database (Breeze, Jilek 2008).

Starting point for the project *Frontiers of the Roman Empire – the European dimension of a world heritage site* and the objective to unite different section of the Roman limes that have similar nature and type of monuments but are located in different regional, cultural, political, economic, scientific and heritage protection conditions and contexts in one WHS, was the creation of a professional network to help to harmonize and optimize further WHS nominations. The challenge was answered with a research strategy that embraced all the European frontiers, foundation of the Bratislava group<sup>11</sup> and the proposal of Koblenz Declaration in 2004, the short description of the first stage of the new FRE WHS.<sup>12</sup> Model of cooperation from the Bratislava group (Jilek 2008b: 201-203), established foremost to provide professional and technical advice in relation to the proposed 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site', is paradigmatic.

The main objectives of the *FRE – the European dimension of the WHS* were: the improvement of documentation on Roman frontier; the creation and development of various means to provide publicly accessible information of all the European frontiers (web-portal, a series of exhibitions on Roman frontiers, etc); capacity building and training of the professionals using formulated guidelines for the protection, preservation, management, presentation and

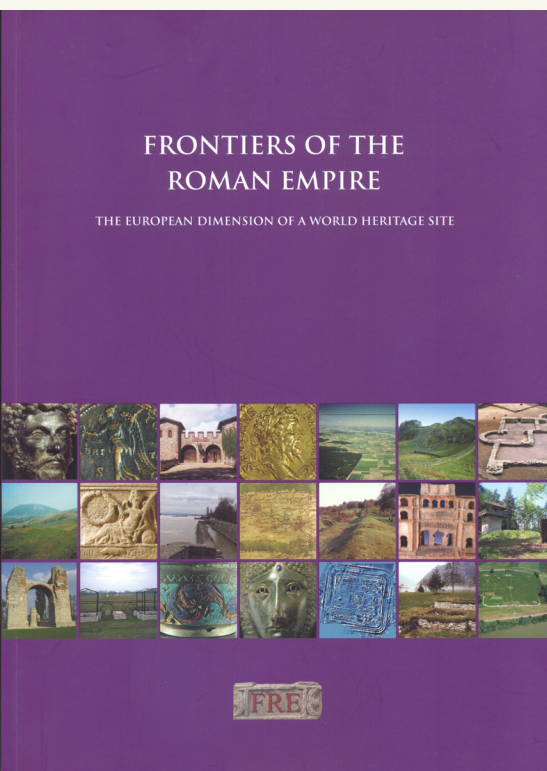


Fig. 11. Frontiers of the Roman Empire – the European dimension of a world heritage site edited by D. Breeze and S. Jilek (© Historic Scotland, UK)

interpretation of Roman military sites. Finally, as the cultural site, and not just archaeological site, project has not only been looking to the long-term future of Roman military sites but also into their relationship to the public, meaning that connection with cultural tourism organizations and usage of cultural tourism in the sustainable development of different communities along the limes was vital (Breeze, Jilek 2008).

Following good practise and outcome of the *FRE Culture 2000 programme* a new project, initiated by Hungary and Slovakia, *The Danube Limes – UNESCO World Heritage* was realized within the Central European Programme from 2008 to 2011. Utilized were objectives, methodology and model of

international cooperation from the preceding project and successful research carried out within the framework of this project (Visy 2011), resulted in preparation of all documents necessary for the nomination process of Hungary (Máté 2011) and Slovakia (Pinčíková 2011).

The nomination of the Moesian limes for the FRE WHS, like in other countries, represents the complex and long-lasting procedure and project that necessarily needs a cross-sectoral approach, with a prospect for interdisciplinary and international co-operation (Dyczek et al. 2011). It is vital to achieve appropriate balance between scientific research, preservation, conservation, interpretation, access, and the interests of local communities and sustainable economic use of archaeological sites. Requirements for the World Heritage Site are different and pure scientific approach is not enough - science here gives fundament to the cultural heritage, and lot of other aspects are required (Visy 2009: 139). This means that from the start, at the beginning of the process, there is urgent need for involvement of not solely research and university institutions, but professionals from the heritage field – museum, conservation – and from management, education, tourism. So far information is available only for a small group of experts.

Serbian scholars await several parallel areas of action and activities in the process of preparation for the nomination of the Moesian limes that shortly could be categorized in three fields: documentation and research, presentation of limes and raising public awareness.

The description of the monuments based on an up-to-date inventory is the required basis of all WHS applications.<sup>13</sup> Gathering all data, making a complete record for the proposed monuments is of vital importance for all national submissions.<sup>14</sup> The improvement of documentation on Roman frontiers is the first necessary step. To collect and complete our Limes records involves both archive work and various archaeological prospection methods that could improve and enhance knowledge about limes structure and particular features. Geophysical surveys, archaeological surveys and excavations are expanding our knowledge of many different elements of the frontier, and the component parts of the barrier itself, forts and fortlets, civil settlements and minor features, could be identified better and our knowledge expand. Some sections of the frontier have been well explored, others are far less well known. A hinterland of the Moesian limes is falling tightly to this category. Additionally, accurate mapping is a key tool for the heritage bodies involved in site protection and management.<sup>15</sup> On a long-term basis it is necessary to establish a full inventory of all monuments, and to catalogue vast range of material relating to the frontier kept in different institutions, mainly museums (**Fig. 12**).

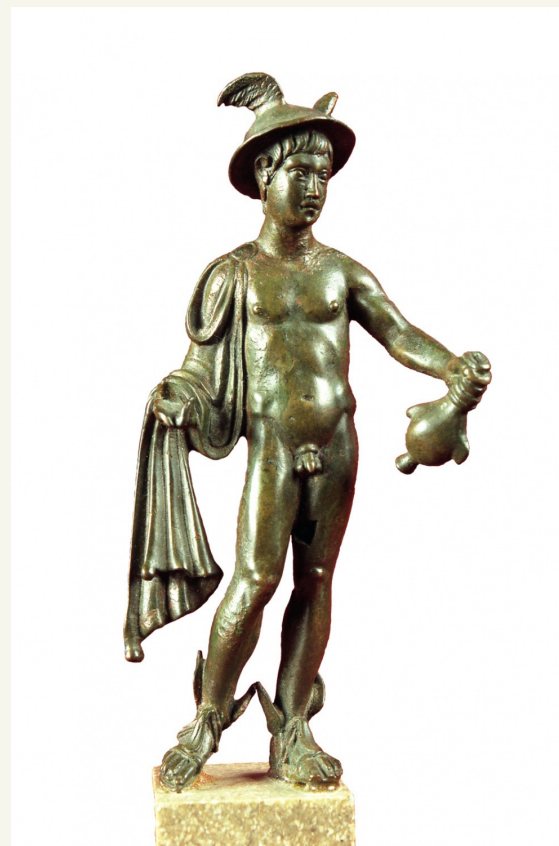


Fig. 12. Bronze statuette of Mercury, Diana (Archaeological Museum of Iron Gates)

Another necessary step is conservation and presentation of the frontier remains, various activities that will ensure better safeguard, protection and conservation of military sites and structures. Conservation is already part of the most of archaeological investigations, but on a minimum level, as mandatory final action for preservation of structures unearthed during excavations, and not as fundamental element of a management plans. Conservation management, based on the holistic approach, with a risk assessment as a basic step in the process, is required for systematic, effective and most of all responsible management of cultural heritage. Cooperation between cultural resource managers and heritage professionals (curators and conservators) is essential for the presentation of sites to the public in a way that the archaeological resource is adequately protected (the relationships between heritage protection and tourism concepts are not entirely unproblematic) and the public appropriately informed. Additionally, the state of preservation of all sites is necessary to demonstrate (Fig. 13).

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Fig. 13.  
Excavations at Diana  
(photo J. Kondić)



Information prepared by heritage professionals about the various structures of the Limes monuments – about its local and European dimension, about their history and place in the Roman Empire and culture – as one of the exemplary and prominent features and symbols of the Roman culture and civilization, ensures reliable and accurate presentations. Instead of romantic notions about importance of the Balkan territory for the development and existence of the Roman Empire, and vague and mistaken connections drawn between Roman and national history,<sup>16</sup> scientific narratives are necessary. Current knowledge of general public is very low, often imprecise – tangled with idealistic notions and occasionally with memory of the nation, and it is necessary to raise public awareness and present detailed information that will try to interpret heritage and, primarily, integrate it in the contemporary society. To enhance local awareness it is important not just to involve but to engage local communities: to bring the heritage to people means to formulate together with local communities common aspirations for the future. Different possibilities for dissemination of information are available and were implemented for the public in other countries: booklets, web portals, national websites, virtual reconstructions, virtual exhibitions and actual exhibitions. It is important not to forget the international context for a national Limes presentation.

Thus, the policy makers from various institutions, on different administrative levels (national, regional, local, owner of property), have to be involved from the beginning in the process, and to be the guarantee of the sustainable development based on cultural and economic considerations. During the last decade we can recognize a massive interest of the communities for an increased use of the monuments and they should be able to benefit from this huge archaeological potential. Close cross-sector collaboration especially with tourism will not only create a more efficient management, but also improve the awareness for the cultural heritage (Breeze 2008: 109–111; Sommer et al. 2008: 129–139). Cultural routes along the Limes could be integrated in already existing tourism infrastructure and we could make use of the cultural potential of regions in partner-countries to develop sustainable tourism and cultural routes in Serbia. This certainly could be better achieved by a transnational co-operation between museums, municipalities and tourism organizations (Flügel 2008: 175–178; Flügel 2008a: 197–199).

Another important participant is educators, essential for the future of the cultural and natural heritage in general. They should be at least informed – schools, universities, scientific centres at all levels – about the potential nominations and used to raise awareness about many of our problems of safeguarding the cultural heritage (**Fig. 14**). The Frontiers of Roman Empire are, as well, amazing example of common heritage that can foster international connections and dialogue.

Some of these challenges have already been addressed: Serbia in last couple of years responded to these tasks involving small number of representatives from the scientific community and representatives from the national UNESCO committee in the process. Serbia is also involved in a new project, formulated as the extension of the transnational UNESCO WHS FRE into the Danube countries, based on the previous models of international cooperation that was the core of successful nomination process for western and central European countries. The *Danube limes brand - Extension of the Danube Limes UNESCO World Heritage in the Lower Danube*<sup>17</sup> is the southeast Europe transnational cooperation programme co-funded by European Union, with the lead partner being Institute for History, University of Vienna.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 14.  
Educational activities of  
the National Museum  
in Belgrade: European  
Heritage Days 2005

Partner from Serbia, included as IPA partner,<sup>19</sup> is the Archaeological Institute Belgrade.<sup>20</sup> Focus of the *Limes Danube brand* is on documentation and the World Heritage nomination process in the individual Danube countries, but as well on common marketing and brand strategies, with the intention to raise greater public awareness and the possibility of creating a cultural route along the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

### Role of museums in the FRE Serbian nomination

A central role in the dissemination of information on limes monuments, communication and access should shoulder museums. As institutions looking after all the finds from Roman frontier, and places that present detail information and interpretation of the past, form identities and raise awareness about the importance of the cultural heritage, museums should be included from the beginning into

the nomination process and discussions on the FRE proposal (Flügel 2008: 175–178).

Museums should be involved in the research and documentation of the Limes, presentation of both sites and finds (**Fig. 15**), and as the starting point of cultural or touristic routes. Additionally, many museums are also responsible for preserved monuments along the Limes, and should be part of conservation management. Not to mention, as well, that the application for WHS includes a management plan where a major component is a museum development plan.<sup>21</sup>

Besides involvement in excavations and non-invasive scientific investigations, museums are vital for documentation from excavations that should be systematized and available. Historical sources for archaeological research on the Moesian limes should be a common task of the museums and the state offices for the protection of monuments, alongside with scientific institutions (**Fig. 16**),<sup>22</sup> serving as a basis for the restoration of the original structures.

Fig. 15 – Parade helmet, Smederevo (National Museum in Belgrade)



Fig. 16. The exhibition *With Kanitz trough Serbia*, National Museum in Belgrade 2010

They present conditions and methods of safeguarding, showing the deterioration of an archaeological monument. Together with finds, an integral and inseparable part of the protected monument, they help to understand the ancient functions of the objects and illustrate as well how much historical heritage can be lost when a monument is destroyed.

A major task of the museums is to offer detail information about the Moesian limes and about the Frontiers of the Roman Empire and to enable the public to understand the linear Limes frontier in its entire context. We expect museums to offer a wide range of information on the history, function and preservation of the Limes as well as on general themes related to the Roman Empire (**Fig. 17**). Challenge for the museums it to integrate a display of the latest Limes research findings in their permanent exhibitions and to present evidence of Roman life and culture as a mosaic of exhibitions presenting a network of evidence and comprehensive view of the Limes.



Fig. 17 – The Archaeological Museum of Iron Gates

This means that museums along the Roman frontier line have a new role, different than in this moment, and that Serbian museums should re-think their displays and re-shape their organizational network and ways of cooperation.

Along the Moesian limes are the Belgrade City Museum, the Museum of Smederevo, the National Museum in Požarevac, future Viminacium museum in the *Domus scientiarum Viminacium*, the Archaeological museum of Iron Gates, part of the National Museum in Belgrade, and finally the Museum of Krajina in Negotin. To this group belongs the National Museum in Belgrade as well. Contrary to situation in other limes countries, where the first point of contact of general public is typically local museum, here national museum is usually the first visiting spot.<sup>23</sup> They all keep original findings from the limes excavations (**Fig. 18**) and most of them take care as well about preserved limes remains. Apart from upcoming Viminacium museum, and specialized archaeological museum of the Iron Gates in Kladovo, all of them are museums of complex type and they present a variety of themes related to history and culture of their region or city. Usually, as a result, we have displays covering huge time span and emphasizing in the most museums still the unique, the beautiful or the aesthetically appealing and exotic when telling stories about the past.



Fig. 18 – Ceramic urn, Čezava (Archaeological Museum of Iron Gates)

In order to concentrate on noteworthy archaeological features in the relevant topographical and regional surroundings, those museums should consider new approach when creating new displays and exhibitions, highlighting local aspects and dealing thematically with individual fort sites or sections of

the Limes. All of them should concentrate on local issues, allowing them to consider different aspects of Roman life and life on the Limes.<sup>24</sup> These museums should become regional information centres able to convey an impression of the Limes in their area to their community and to general population. Presentations should be cross-linked with cultural routes and connected with tourism development, and not just to present the most valuable testimonies of the past, high achievements of past cultures and the most beautiful objects, diminishing artefacts to a one-dimensional representational sign of the past.

Museums are powerful agents in the creation of a collective memory and official representations – and

this reality is often forgotten in Serbia. They enhance individual knowledge, challenge attitudes or provoke emotions. Museum narratives have a powerful role, and not just as centres of information but as sources of opinions, reasoning and believe. To be able to present and interpret past, collections should be understood as simply one of a number of resources to be used for the accomplishment of a larger public purpose (Weil 2002: 60). Different histories could be written from archaeological evidence (Fig. 19). Familiar data have to be used to represent to wider public not so familiar data and to try to 'reveal the invisible' (Flügel 2008: 175–177).

Meanwhile, while waiting for the new basic display of several of mentioned museums, new technology is allowing us to present the Limes and particular monuments, increasing information and public awareness. Creating web sites, as well joint ones,<sup>25</sup> and virtual reconstructions of archaeological sites or findings, which could easily be incorporated into modern displays, is one of the possibilities. Good example from Serbia is the *Danube virtual Museum*, developed by the PE Belgrade fortress.<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 19.  
– Parade breast-plate, Ritopek  
(National Museum in Belgrade)

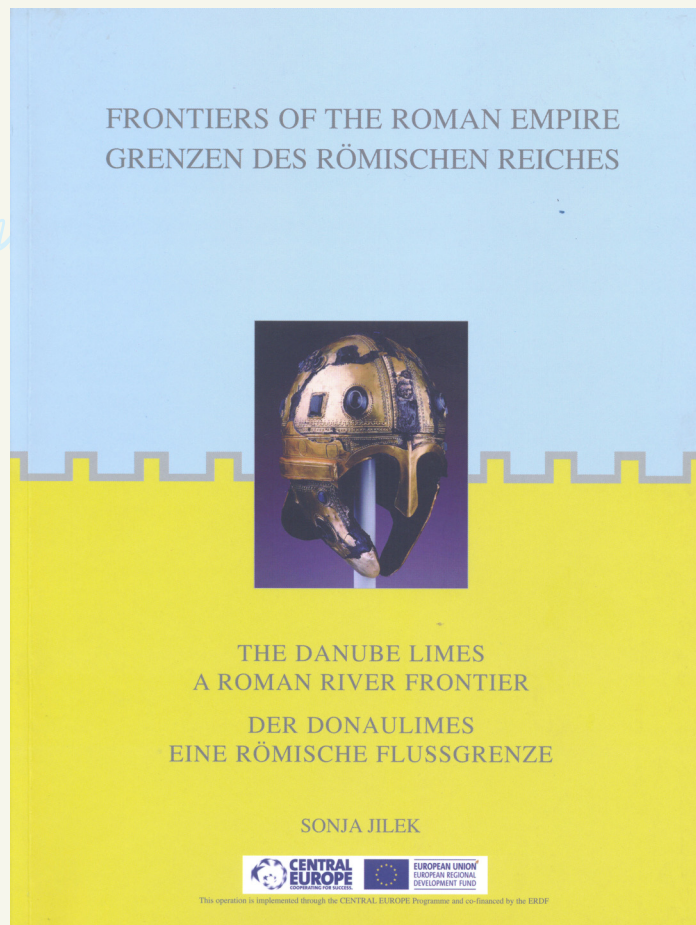
All different data that could be displayed allow museums to truly serve as the starting point of cultural or touristic experiences. A long-term development of the Limes as a touristic goal is very important, both for the permanent protection of Limes monuments and for an economic development of the region.<sup>27</sup> One of very interesting examples, that includes sites on the Moesian limes, is the project *Itinerarium Romanum Serbiae* (*Road of Roman Emperors in Serbia*), which links together different places of historical and archaeological importance in Serbia, ensuring adequate heritage preservation as well as fostering cultural tourism.<sup>28</sup>

Archaeological sites along Upper Moesian limes represented at all times enormous resource for a common work of scholars, and not just of those from so-called social or humanistic sciences. For the presentation of amazing variety of data, as we have seen during this Humboldt conference with the topic *Resources of Danubian Region*, both museums along the Limes as well as archaeological sites could be utilized. We could make the most of interweaving of the Danube research, and with presentation of all different characteristics of the Danube area. For example, the Đerdap National Park (on the Tentative list of Serbia as a natural heritage in 2002) could be used to promote Roman fortified border and vice versa.

### Conclusion

Potential nomination of the Roman frontier preserved in Serbia for the World Heritage Site is a huge opportunity for the scientific community as well as for all included in heritage protection. It is the process that requires application of wide ranging knowledge, experience and skills and it is offering also huge capacity for cooperation. Recognition of the fortified Roman frontier, archaeological sites and monuments as the cultural heritage that might be part of the WHS, changes completely approach to its research, preservation and presentation. This enormous cooperation potential is not limited on scientist and heritage professionals in Serbia – common work that we should all more benefit from, but means interregional cooperation in developing, improving and presenting individual Limes sites and development of a joint action strategy (**Fig. 20**). Frontiers of the Roman Empire were

Fig. 20 – Danube River Frontier by S. Jilek (© Central Europe Project Danube Limes – UNESCO World Heritage)



never just the first line of defence, but more of communication line, and those implications for regional and trans-border cooperation and communication even more important today. The Frontiers of Roman Empire are amazing example of common heritage that can foster international connections and dialogue.

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## Endnotes

1. The World Heritage List of UNESCO includes 962 properties (of which 745 cultural), in 157 states parties all around the world ([whc.unesco.org/en/list](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list) – last accessed on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013).
2. UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, ratified, as of September 2012, by 190 state parties ([whc.unesco.org/en/convention](http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention); [whc.unesco.org/en/about](http://whc.unesco.org/en/about) – last accessed on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013).
3. Initiative of Prof. Zsolt Visy to promote the concept of a multinational WHS encompassing different sections of the frontier in Europe, resulted in the agreement made in September 2001, by a group of Roman archaeologists (Dr Henry Cleere, Prof. Siegmund von Schnurbein, Dr Sebastian Sommer, Dr Andreas Thiel, Dr Christopher Young and Prof. David Breeze), at the European Archaeological Association's Annual Conference at Esslingen, that the creation of a single WHS encompassing all the frontiers of the Roman empire would be an achievable aim (Breeze, Jilek 2008a: 25).
4. For further reading on European limes sections and sites: Breeze, Dobson 2000 (United Kingdom); Czysz et al. 1995 (Germany); Fischer 2002; Gassner et al. 2002 (Austria); Visy 2003 (Hungary); Vagalinski et al. 2012 (Bulgaria).
5. [whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists) (last accessed on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013).
6. Remains of the most southern stretch of Pannonian limes, part of the province Pannonia Inferior, belong as well to the territory of nowadays Serbia. In this paper we are presenting the Moesian part of the Limes with greater number of preserved structures. On Pannonian limes in Serbia: Đorđević 2007: 60–79.
7. Territory of the province Moesia Superior embraced, beside central and south Serbia, western part of nowadays Bulgaria and northern part of present Macedonia.
8. Territory of Moesia Superior was divided into provinces Moesia Prima and Dacia Ripensis, with northern border being the river Danube, while in hinterland, Dacia Mediterranea – comprising parts of former Moesia Inferior and Thracia – and Dardania were established.
9. In this moment, in May 2012, on the Serbian tentative list, are 11 nominations, five of them cultural heritage, and the only archaeological site of the Roman period is Caričin Grad – Iustiniana prima, nominated in 2010 ([whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=rs](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=rs), last approached on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013).
10. The application of the programme Frontiers of the Roman Empire for Culture 2000 was successful in 2005 (Breeze, Jilek 2008a: 7). The FRE Culture 2000 programme has allowed significant research and recording to be carried out across Europe (Breeze, Jilek 2008), lasting until 2008.
11. Bratislava group was established at meeting in Bratislava, in March 2003. “The group consists of representatives of those state parties which are already part of the WHS, have nominated their section of the frontier, or have officially stated that they intend to nominate their section of the frontier, together with co-opted members” (Jilek 2008b: 201). The Group was concerned with research and documentation, presentation and public awareness, implication of FRE being the WHS, with the focus of their advice being UNESCO and the state parties containing part of the World Heritage Site or intending to propose their own sections of the frontier as part of the Site. The existence of the Group was recognized within the Summary Nomination Statement for the ‘Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site’ (Breeze, Jilek 2008: 27–28) and its role accepted by the World Heritage Committee meeting in Durban in July 2005.
12. “The Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site (FRE WHS) should consist of the line(s) of the frontier of the height of the empire from Trajan to Septimius Severus (about 100 – 200 AD), and military installations of different periods which are on that line. The installations include fortresses, forts, towers, the limes road, artificial barriers and immediately associated civil structures”. This declaration – a preliminary draft was proposed during the European Archaeological

- Association's Annual Conference in Esslingen in 2001 – was included in the German nomination document and accepted by UNESCO (Jilek 2008b: 201).
13. Within the scope of the FRE Culture 2000 project one of the most important tasks was working towards standards in documentation (Sommer 2008: 71-73).
  14. The Moesian limes, similar to other river frontier sections, is concerned with additional difficulty. Even if military installations form continuous fortified frontier along the Danube, visible connecting elements, apparent on artificial borders like the Hadrian's or Antonine Wall, lack on linear river frontiers. Military installations forming the frontier line along Danube were elected close to a point of change from a rather narrow to open part of the river valley, and not just regular spacing (Sommer 2009: 105), as fortifications at the Moesian limes also show. They were connected by roads and by the river itself. Therefore in the case of river frontiers, such as the Rhine and Danube frontiers, the definition of the linearity is a key element for the heritage bodies involved in site protection and management (Jilek 2009: 42–48).
  15. Scottish and German partners in the FRE Culture 2000 formulated guidelines for the documentation of physical boundaries and in consultation with colleagues from across Europe, based on a sophisticated mapping programme for the Antonine Wall set up for the World Heritage application, formulated guidelines for mapping the frontier installations (Jones, Thiel 2008: 99–105).
  16. See, for example, a celebration of 1700 years of the Edict of Milan in Serbia ([www.edictofmilan2013.com](http://www.edictofmilan2013.com)).
  17. [www.danubelimesbrand.org](http://www.danubelimesbrand.org) (last approached on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013)
  18. Prof. Dr. Andreas Schwarcz and Dr. Sonja Jilek are lead persons of the project.
  19. The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) offers assistance to countries engaged in the accession process to the European Union (EU) for the period 2007-2013 (Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006).
  20. Contact persons are Dr. Miomir Korać, Dr. Snežana Golubović and Dr. Nemanja Mrđić (project Viminacium – Roman town and legionary fortress), and Dr. Stefan Pop-Lazić (project Romanization, urbanization and transformation of urban centers with civilian, military and residential character in the Roman provinces on the territory of Serbia) is involved as well. The National tourism organization of Serbia is also included, as the associated partner.
  21. For example, for the German states representatives of the states, the museums, relevant state associations, the “Deutsche Limesstraße” association and the working group “Welterbe Limes” created the development plan for the museums at the Upper German-Raetian Limes. It defines various categories and levels of museums as well as their communication strategies (Flügel 2008a: 197).
  22. The excellent example is recently published book on Felix Kanitz's work on Danube (Kostić 2011) and the exhibitions of the National Museum in Belgrade on Kanitz's work (*With Kanitz through Serbia* with more than 30 venues in Serbia and abroad organized during 2010-2012).
  23. Struggling for the last decade with bad conditions of the central building, problems of safeguarding and security and with lack of space, the National Museum is in the process of renovation, without the permanent display. Unfortunately for the citizens of Belgrade and Serbia, as well as for tourist, with the Historical Museum of Serbia and the Belgrade City museum without the archaeological display, there is no place in Belgrade with relevant information and representation of the past cultures and history, especially of the Roman period. There is the opportunity to create fresh presentations, to think about new ways of making the shared past and its material culture interesting to the public, to fulfil important task to involve community more.
  24. Presentations and interpretation should also include narratives about daily life, relationships – within family, women on the frontier, with supreme powers (believes), communications (literacy), supply (diet and hunger in ancient times), connections with modern frontiers and discussions about modern issues relating to borders. Local issues could consider development of the same frontier in later times (Smederevo fortress) and meaning and significance of the frontier

- through later centuries (Belgrade City Museum), artisan production and workshops (Viminacium, National Museum in Požarevac), burials (Viminacium), transport (Museum of Krajina), military campaigns, military equipment and weapons (Archaeological museum of Iron Gates).
25. Bavaria and Hadrian's Wall developed and implemented a joint website of their local museums in Ruffenhofen/Bavaria and Maryport/Cumbria ([www.senhousemuseum.co.uk](http://www.senhousemuseum.co.uk); [www.roemerpark-ruffenhofen.de](http://www.roemerpark-ruffenhofen.de)). This special attempt could be used as a role model to create a professional Limes museum network to promote further research and knowledge sharing across Europe (Flügel 2008: 174–178).
26. <http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/home/about-us.457.html>, last approached on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2103.
27. The Limes Danube brand project is placing great importance on both preservation and presentation of Danube Limes, including creation of brand modules for a Danube Limes destination.
28. [www.viminacium.org.rs/IRS/index.html?language=english](http://www.viminacium.org.rs/IRS/index.html?language=english); [www.srbija.travel/kultura/putevi-kulture/put-kulture-rimskih-imperatora/](http://www.srbija.travel/kultura/putevi-kulture/put-kulture-rimskih-imperatora/), last approached on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

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